MASS LINE

May

Election Special

Re.1/-

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Ram's Insaaf took Shambuk's head

The RSS-VHP-BJP combine is now contesting the coming election with the slogan of 'Ram, roti and insaaf —literally Ram, bread and justice. It had decided to make the building of the temple at Ayodhya the central focus of its campaign. The shift shows that all is not well. The Hindu fascists are beating the retreat well before the battle.

This seems puzzling. The BJP has managed to attract and entrench itself among the upper castes who traditionally supported the Congress-I. The Hindu fascists have also managed to get a bunch of leading Brahminical high priests to publicly endorse its platform. Then why the worry? Why this infighting revealed through the fiasco of the attempt to project the moderate Vajpayee as the next PM?

One factor is the polarisation caused by the Mandal report. The Hindu majority has been exposed for what it really is – a minority of upper castes. Yet another important aspect is the hurdles faced by Hindu revivalism in transforming itself into a full-fledged political force which can run the state. The relation between religion and state power in Brahminism is distinctly different from that of Islam or Christianity. Brahminism has generally played the role of the guiding principles of state power while maintaining a 'holy' identity separate from the state. It has rarely appeared as a theocracy. But if the Hindu fascists must succeed in their plans this is what is needed. They must stake their claim to the state as a political force. The religious fervour aroused around Ram must be replaced by the real politik of Ram, thus debasing and demystifying the very symbol they project. This raises the danger of repelling large sections who are not yet within the RSS-VHP- BJP fold. It is not easy to play the dual role game of Ram as god and campaign leader. Right now, bourgeois politics of all hues has earned a stink and quite a good section influenced by Hindu revivalism are not happy about Ram's running to be part of the smell. But the Hindu fascists cannot return Ram to his original position of being a mortal king of ancient days or take up the Gandhian fable of Ram rajya. This is why the Hindu fascists had to try and patch up Ram and his bread with the 'justice' tape. It will not stick on very well because they stand in contradiction. The justice of Ram was that of cutting off the shudra Shambuk's head and pushing the woman Sita into the fire.

DR. AMBEDKAR AND VOTING RIGHTS

Universal Suffrage or Universalising Brahminism

Universal suffrage or one vote for one citizen regardless of caste, class creed is the highest motto realised by bourgeois democracy. In principle everybody has a say in deciding affairs of the state. Anybody can come to power. In practice, the power of money (capital) decides everything. Still the progress in the change from rule of kings or queens through birthright is obvious. In India the change made by the principle of universal suffrage is equally obvious. Or is it?

In India the adoption of this principle was bound up with the struggle over the joint electorate constituency. Where all the voters of a constituency vote elect one candidate. Threatened by the upper caste Hindu grip in the colonial administration, the religious minorities (particularly Muslims) and the Dalits had demanded separate electorates and reservation of seats. This means that a fixed number of seats are allotted to each community or caste and only members of that community/caste participates in the voting to elect the candidates. Gandhi and the Congress were willing (not so easily,of course)to concede this principle for the Muslims. But they were deadly opposed to its implementation in the case of the the Dalits and backward castes. Gandhi staged a hunger strike to pressurise the Dalits led by Dr.Ambedkar to accept joint electorates. The Poona Pact led to the system of joint electorates constituencies and the reservation of some such constituencies for the Dalits and tribal peoples. This is the system which continues right upto now.

The Poona Pact is generally acclaimed as a progressive step. But Dr.Ambedkar soon realised the blunder. Even in the reserved constituencies, the Dalit candidate succeeds only by getting the votes of the upper castes. These votes are crucial since the Dalit's votes get divided among the candidates. So the success of any Dalit candidate actually depends on the extent he or she is able to get into the good books of the upper castes. The great democratic principle of universal suffrage becomes another tool for preserving Brahminism. This is also true of the general constituencies because the candidate's fate is usually decided by the success in putting up a suitable person from the predominant caste/community and in forging suitable caste alliances. This is why Dr.Ambedkar (now promoted by the all-India ruling class as the father of the Indian Constitution) remarked that the parliamentary majority in India is a communal majority decided by birth right and not a political majority which can change (in theory at least —ML) with the up and downs of classes or their factions.

Universal suffrage in India has not only helped in preserving the caste system. It has actually played the key role in universalising Brahminism by forcing each caste to mobilise itself on casteist lines and by forcing each parliamentary party (including the Left) to incorporate caste/community as a key component of their election strategy.

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Unity in Diversity of Manifestoes

{From Page 8}

a pro-Hindu stand. Already a section of Muslims are disillusioned with it. They are doubtful about people who tell them to expect justice from the same court which opened up the Masjid for Hindus to worship the idol illegally placed there, continues to ban Muslims entry and permitted the stone installation of Ram temple inside the Babri Masjid.

The Left:

The position of the Left in this election is most outrageous. It is in the National Front camp eventhough it differs on all crucial issues. In the reservation issue its views are more similar with Cong-I and BJP. It believes in economic reservation than caste reservation. In the Punjab election issue CPI(M) is with Cong-I and BJP for not conducting elections there in the name of preventing any weakening of the suppression campaign and has at last agreed to participate alongwith Cong-I and BJP if enough suppression is guaranteed. Obviously the Left has more in common with Cong-I and BJP rather than Janata Dal. It is there in the Janata Dal camp only to exploit Muslim and backward caste votes to have an entry into the cow belt. The opportunist positions of the CPI(M) and the whole parliamentary Left indicates that the coalitions stability Jyoti Basu talks about is not stability in principle. The Hindu appeasing attitude of CPI(M) is also evident from its much proclaimed 'rethinking on religion'.

The economy

On the economic scenario and the positions of the ruling classes to resolve it, we can see that there is not much difference. **The so-called democratic exercise to be conducted in India itself is really depended on foreign loans and dictations. The government has only about 1500 crores in its kitty.** The election itself needs more than that. India's foreign debt has increased to Rs.1,25,000 crores and the balance of payments position is very acute.

The unanimous solution put forward by parliamentary parties to solve the crisis is to go again for a new IMF loan.

CAN THE N F OUT-MANDAL MANDAL?

Sunil

The National Front-Left coalition and particularly V.P.Singh are depending on the Mandal report to see them through the elections. Within the coalition the attitudes on this dependency are not uniform. Not everyone is happy about it. Some particularly the CPM, TDP and AGP - have taken up the Mandal platform because there is no other way. The CPM has tried its best to push for including reservation for the economically weaker sections of the upper castes. The support for this position from within the NF and the JD is clearly reflected in the manifesto which talks of such reservation and one more committee to remove the 'flaws' in the Mandal report. In fact only a small group around VP Singh is promoting the Mandal report as part of a conscious, overall political strategy to tackle the severe crisis affecting the Indian state. This strategy is that of liberal integrationism. It stands for defusing the sharpening national and other contradictions by assimilating the challenges from below. Ever since his dismissal from power VP Singh has been stressing this strategy and projecting the Mandal Report as a revolution for equity.

Among the broad masses of the backward castes, Dalits and tribal peoples, VP Singh's message has received massive support. Regardless of his political strategy which ultimately reinforces the exploitation and domination suffered by them, they see an immediate benefit in his coming back to power.The benefit is not only material (in terms of reservations) but also social, because the polarisation caused by the Mandal issue has created a favourable situation for them — at least in the shortrun. VP Singh has succeeded in giving a new meaning, an aim for the active participatioin of the backward castes, Dalits and the Muslim religious minority (excluding Kashmir) in the coming elections.

This is why the National Front-Left coalition as a whole is keen on promoting the Mandal report as a magic hand — eventhough it is committed by its own manifesto to dilute its recommendations. It will be interesting to see what Mandal himself said about the recommendations: "The chief merit of reservation is not that it will introduce egalitarianism amongst OBCs when the rest of the Indian society is seized by all sorts of ineqalities. But reservations will certainly erode the hold of the higher castes on the services and enable OBCs in general to have **a sense of participation in running the affairs of their country"** (emphasis added, Mandal Report Vol. 1,p.57). Now this is certainly different from their **actual** participation in running the country and Mandal went on to point out that "It is the Commission's firm conviction that **a radical transformation of the existing production relations is the most important single step** that can be taken for the welfare and upliftment of all backward classes." (emhasis added, p.60, ibid).

The National Front is swaying the backward castes and others with the illusion of power. The task of exposing this is a complicated one since there is a possibility of getting some relief. This has created some confusion within the Marxist-Leninist ranks also. One sectioin is not clear on how to propagate the politics of election boycott and rejection of parliamentarism in favour of the armed struggle to seize power in view of the fact that this system can promise some relief in terms of reservation. The other is more clear in theorising this confusion by arguing that VP Singh's decision to implement the Mandal report is actually breaking out of the bounds of ruling class politics whatever might be his intentions. This is because it has delivered a blow at Brahminism.

This aproach is defeatist and has its source in loosing the political initiative on the Mandal and other issues. Apart from that there is also a narrow, casteist grasp of what Brahminism implies and the dynamics of Brahminisation. It would be good to recollect the point made by Dr.Ambedkar that Brahminism does not mean the interests of the Brahmins alone. It is an ideology which has affected all castes. Hence it is quite possible to absorb newer strata of the lower castes into the state structure without endangering the hegemonic grip of Brahminism inherent in the all-India ruling class and also without eliminating the upper castes grip. Historically speaking, this is exactly the process by which a number of the present-day 'forward' castes achieved this status. Just a hundred years or so back they were kept beyond the inner circles of power. So the shake up caused by the Mandal report is still something which can be co-opted by Brahminism. In fact, this is the guiding thought of liberal integrationism.

It is true that the illussions of power and immediate benefits will sway the masses of the oppressed castes. But they have also revealed through their response to the Mandal issue that anti-Brahminic traditions still remain as a strong force among them. The boycott platform can definitely achieve a serious hearing from the masses attracted by VP Singh's Mandal platform by appealing to this tradition and sharpening the un3ique of the parliamentary system to expose its Brahminising role. This type of propaganda can really put all the policical parties in a real fix and force them to acknowledge the active political presence of the Marxist- Leninists. It can sharpen the contradictions within these parties by forcing them to define their stand in clear terms. In the coming period, when the expections of power aroused by liberal integrationism collide with the fact that it can only deliver an illusion of power, this consistent stand will help in producing a qualitative turn. Nobody can out-mandal Mandal — except the oppressed led by proletarian ideology. ■

Statement of General Elections :

This General Election is taking place at a particular juncture in the history of India. Different types of polarisations and contradictions are intensifying in an unprecedented way, compelling the ruling class to try for new realignments in order to save themselves by somehow preserving the integration of the country which is seriously challenged by the mounting struggles of different national peoples and by the awakening of the oppressed caste and religious minority sections of the society. On the face of these polarisations and undercurrents, ruling class sections themselves are not in a position to show any semblance of unity or at least some principled alignments. All types of horse-trading and floor-crossings are going on, reflecting the disarray and the consequent weakening of the ruling class authority at the Centre. So this coming General Election is going to reflect at least some aspects of these intensifying polarisations and undercurrents.

The threatening growth of Hindu fascism during the recent past was the result of the spread of integrationist politics as a response to the various national struggles which emerged in Assam, Punjab etc. When Cong-I gave up its secular mask and embraced Hindu communal policies, whipping up anti-Sikh communal feelings among the masses, in the beginning as a trumpcard for defending the unity and integrity of the country, all other so-called secular democratic parties including the 'left' parties followed the suit. This favourable atmosphere was well utilised by Hindu-fascists to whip up anti-Muslim communalism by raising the Babri Masjid issue. Cong-I tactics of utilising the Ram temple issue in their favour was effectively countered by the RSS-BJP- VHP combine by insisting on smashing the Masjid for building the Mandir.

Janata Dal under VP Singh came forward with a third course of liberal integrationism for protecting the unity of the country. But the struggling forces of Kashmir could very effectively expose the hollowness of this brand of liberalism. BJP again tried to utilise the new upsurge of Kashmiri people as an anti-Muslim prop for whipping up Hindu communalism.

The polarisation which started strengthening in the beginning of 80s between the forces of integration and the forces of national liberation was now taking new turns. The sudden growth of rabid Hindu forces compelled the oppressed caste sections to retaliate. The contradictions which were already emerging at this level in different parts of the country assumed an exploding dimension when VP Singh govt. announced the decision to implement the Mandal Report due to the pressures of internal divisions within the Janata Dal. Eventhough he tried to interpret this decision also in terms of his liberal integrationism, it led to a countrywide polarisation along castelines between oppresser castes and the oppressed castes, creating an entirely new political situation all over the country. It was a big blow to the Hindu fascists forces who were drawing on winning over the support of the whole Hindu community irrespective of caste dimensions, for building their Hindu Rashtra. All the political parties and social organisations started polarising along these social divisions.

Expose the Hindu Fascist

This unprecedented development thoroughly exposed the hollowness of the socalled democratic and secular political system existing here. The Hindu revivalist colour of all the socalled progressive, left, secular parties got thoroughly exposed. Similarly the upper caste bearings of all these parties also got exposed in the reservation issue. Though VP Singh spoke about equality and justice for the oppressed castes, he was forced to compromise to the upper caste lobby, announcing concession after concession to the upper caste sections, diluting the very basis of the sharp polarisation which was emerging and limiting implementation of Mandal report. But despite such attempt to save his government some how, VP Singh could not succeed. The Hindu revivalists took up the Babri Masjid issue even more aggressively in order to overcome the deep caste polarisation and pulled down VP Singh's government with the support of the Congress-I and the faction within the Janata Dal.

The Hindu communal casteist forces are serving the interests of the compradore monopoly ruling classes in India. These interests are mutually dependent on each

other. That is why any anti- Brahminic position, that is not having the anti-monopoly content can not reflect genuine democratic and secular position. Similarly, any struggle against the all-India comprador monopolies and imperialism which does not have an anti-Brahminic content also cannot reflect a genuine democratic and secular position. Now, all the ruling class parties are being tested on this ground about their genuine interests. Despite all the alignments and realignments going on among the parliamentary parties, none of them are willing to break away from the path of dependence on imperialism. Each, in their own way, has shown that they will follow a slavish policy and obey each and every diktat of imperialist economic bodies. Similarly, the parties, whatever the colour, who still talk about 'self-reliance' have clearly shown that they are not willing to support the oppressed castes beyond certain safe limits. They may be prepared to give some concessions like reservations, but they will not take up a sharp anti-Brahminic struggle. All of them are advancing their respective slogans, their respective solutions, basically meant to preserve the stability of the throughly undemocratic society and ensure safe conditions for imperialist comprador exploitation. The alignments and realignments among the parliamentary parties clearly expose the reality that all of them serve the interests of the all India ruling classes. In this background, the so- called anti-Brahminic stance of some of these parties is really a deceptive.

Thus all aspects of democratic revolution in India are coming up very sharply in front of us during this General Election. The struggle for the annihilation of caste, struggle for secularism and the struggle for the self-determination and liberation of nationalities, are emerging so-closely interlinked with each other, eventhough these different aspects are getting expressed in varying degress in different regions. We have to notice that in the areas where the peoples struggle for self-dtermination has gone ahead, like in Kashmir, Punjab and Assam no election is taking place. This clearly shows that the whole talk about parliamentary democracy is not going beyond the basic interests of the all-India ruling classes.

This is an important lesson for the oppressed castes and minoritysections of the people who are coming forward in the struggle against Brahminic forces. Such a struggle is to be developed to the task of caste annihilation and to be linked with the struggle for self determination. Similarly if the workers, peasants and other patriotic classes struggling for national liberation do not rid themselves of Brahminic values and energetically take part in the struggle to annihilate caste they will never be able to succeed in their aims. If this interlinkage is lost, all these struggles will be bogged down under parliamentary illusions. That is why we call upon the Dalits, backward castes, the religious minorities and the people in general of different nationalities struggling for their national emancipation to unite and support each other in their struggles against their common enemies, the Hindu fascists all-India ruling classes. To focus on this task and make a sharp break from the xisting parliamentary system stepped in Brahminic values and tied in slavishbonds to imperialism, we call upon them to boycott the Election which is only a cunning flag to prevent the people from taking the correct path for achieving their own liberation. The destiny of the peoples of India can never be decided in Delhi. It has to be decided and acted upon in their own nations. We must prepare ourselves to take up this historic task.

Conspiracy of the Ruling Class!

K.Venu
Secretary
Central Reorganisation Committee
Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)

25.3.1991

IN DEFENCE OF

THE BOYCOTT POLICY

— Muralidharan

Elections once again revives the long standing debate on the boycott policy. The parliamentary record of the undivided CPI, CPM and some sections of the splintered CPI (ML) is known to all. All such attempts invariably emerged from a reformist, revisionist outlook. It emerged from an evaluation which basically denied any possibility of launching an armed struggle in the immediate future. The latest negative example is that of the VM group and its IPF. The IPF could succeed in carving out a place in the parliamentary system only when the VM group gave up the programme of revolution. Those who press for a review argue that all these negative examples are products of a wrong line; under a correct line such deviations can be prevented. Is it possible to separate a line from the policies used to implement it in the way suggested by this argument? A correct line not only uncovers the contradictions and the contemporary crisis faced by the ruling class. It also points out the way to turn these contradictions in the service of revolution. Hence, it also implies the adoption of a certain set of policies to fully realise the potential for revolution. In order to assess whether the dropping of the boycott policy is compatible with a correct political line, we must basically examine its analysis of the direction in which the contradictions in society are moving. We must then see if the abandoning of the boycott policy is going to be of any help in accelerating this motion.

By way of example, the Strategic Line of the CRC, CPI(ML) points out: "The imposed parliamentary system over this neocolonial framework in India has continued to exist so far mainly because the ruling classes are not based on a dominant nationality and hence find it convenient to maintain a consensus of various political forces under their hegemony in the context of numerous formations and the complexities of society. But this system itself is collapsing due to the development of national struggles, and fascist tendencies are growing. So the revolutionary forces should not harbour any illusions of using this parliamentary system. Rather they must actively boycott it and put forward an alternate strategy of building up a parallel system of people's democracy as part and parcel of the revolutionary programme of New Democratic Revolution." The relation between the boycott policy and the assessment made by the political line is crystal clear. The Strategic Line's call emerges from an assessment that the objective situation is ripe for unleashing national liberation struggles and that the masses should be educated about this in order to prepare grounds for actually initiating the armed struggle. This assessment is based on uncovering the inherent weaknesses of the all-India ruling class and its unitary state and the intensification of the national question in relation to ongoing neocolonial transformation. Developments over the past four years only prove the correctness of this evaluation and stress the pressing need to catch up with opportunities lost by the weakness of subjective forces. Can the abandoning of the boycott policy help in this regard? In situations where the revolutionary forces fail to seize the initiative the answer is not so clear.

In the coming elections the Mandal report and the Babri Masjid issue will be the main topics of propaganda. In both the cases mobilisation of the masses has taken place under the more or less exclusive political leadership of one or the other ruling class faction. Besides, the Mandal issue has also given rise to a growing polarisation which is overall positive. Marxist-Leninist intervention has been too late, and too little to make a dent. This has forced them into a position of mainly reacting upon the mobilisation taken up by VP Singh's liberal integrationism. This handicapped position can lead to self-criticism and a determined effort to gain the initiative and deepen the polarisation in favour of revolution. Elections time will give a good opportunity for starting this, since it will expose the caste and class limitations of liberal integrationism's Mandal plank.

But handicapped positions also give rise to some demoralisation and searches for shortcut solutions. Usually such solutions are guided by the thinking that the initiative can be regained only by joining the masses at their level of consciousness. In other words by getting into the 'mainstream' of bourgeois politics. The reasoning is that the alternative posed by revolutionaries must have immediate viability so that it can 'draw away' the masses from the influence of bourgeois political parties. Electing the National Front-Left bloc into power can give immediate results by way of implementing the Mandal report. In comparison the revolutionary alternative which can be advanced with the boycott call is only a distant prospect. So why not enter the election arena with a programme for implementing the Mandal report or some better reform, expose liberal integrationism and win over the masses? One may perhaps succeed in this. But for what purpose? If it is for revolution then this shortcut will be disastrous. **The political significance of the Mandal issue lies in the polarisation it has given rise to, in the exposure of all the cracks in the Indian polity. Given some time the all-India ruling class can absorb the new entrants into the state structure who come by way of reservation, without abandoning Brahminic values. Hence the task before the revolutionaries is to highlight and utilise the shake up created by this absorption, to reveal the potential for revolution and deepen the polarisation by giving it a resolute anti-Brahminic thrust. The masses have to be won over on the basis of this platform which is inseparable from the destruction of neocolonial and Indian integrationist domination. There is absolutely no need to enter the election arena to propagate this politics.** The success of the boycott campaign has to be measure by the extent to which this propaganda is done in a concrete and all-round manner address the very issues raised by bourgeois parties. So long as revolutionary power does not become a viable force, the masses will continue to vote. If we trail them into the polling booths, this power will never emerge. Punjab, Kashmir and Assam have become the focal points of national struggle because a militant section consciously kept themselves separate from the so-called mainstream and worked to initiate armed struggle. No revolutionary parties can ignore this lesson.

Cracks in the political system

— Nandini

The chief election commissioner, T.N. Seshan's predictions on large scale violence during the coming elections, the fixing of a one week period to complete voting so that armed forces can be deployed everywhere, the aversion most of the political parties for conducting elections in Punjab, Assam and Kashmir — all of this reveals that the bourgeois political parties themselves do not have much confidence in the parliamentary process. Their state and political system is in a bad shape.

Overstretched armed forces.

The excessive use of army in controlling conflicts shows the crumbling of the civilian political system. Between 1951-70 period the army was called upon to suppress domestic violence approximately 475 times. But between 1981-84 it was deployed 369 times! In last December the Army was called to quell communal riots in Hyderabad, Aligarh and Ahmedabad as the police and paramilitary forces failed to control them. The army is now permanently deployed in Punjab,Kashmir and Assam to supress national struggles. According to former Chief of Army Staff Gen. V.N.Sharma due to the overstretching of Army, the Army's training programme in upgradation to new weapons and battle techniques had suffered a lot. This has put the ruling class in a dilemma. To consolidate its power it has to deploy army for internal security but it has to limit its own ambitions to become a regional power. The paramilitary forces available to the centre totals about 300 battallions of BSF, ITBP, CRPF and the Assam Rifles, Usually for internal security, half of this is available. But Punjab alone needs about 200,000 paramilitary forces while the total strength is only that much. This is despite the increase in defence and relataed expenditure to boost up the strength of the total armed forces.

Divided Administration

The secularist pretension of the ruling class has been stripped off by the rising communal and caste riots. The total number of people killed during last year is more than the communial killings that occured during partition. The pro-Hindu character of the state is becoming more and more clear. The movements of Dalits and other oppressed castes has caused deeper division in the ruling class on caste lines. The reservation provided in the Constitution is openly denied. Anti-reservation stir staged by Upper caste Hindus had paralysed the entire administrative system, virtually dividing the whole set up into two.

Judiciary in the dock

For some years now the judiciary has been trying to project itself as the bastion of democracy and values. The integrity of its high officials was supposed to be impeccable. Corruption charges against Ramaswamy, Supreme Court justice and the stubborn defence of him by fellow justices has exposed the hollowness of this claim. In an earlier incident justices of the Bombay High Court were also put in the dock by corruption and favouritism charges.

Integrity through parliament

After a gap, discussions among the various political parties on forming a national government have again come up. How can different parteis which have different policies and programmes unitedly rule a country? The discussion itself shows the frustrated efforts of the ruling class to preserve the decaying political system.

On the other hand, the efforts of the ruling class to resolve Punjab, Assam and Kashmir problems through parliamentary process has miserably failed. In Assam, the AGP experiment could not contain the ULFA. It has precipitated the resignation of Mahanta from the chief of AGP post. Akali politics could not contain the struggle of Punjabis. And in Kashmir, National Conference remains outcasted by the people as their war with the Indian Union continue. This decade reflects the failure of the ruling class effortsto control and divert the national aspirations of the people of different nationalities.Instead a leading ruling class figure like Biju Patnaik is forced to talk about secession!

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Printed and published by V. Mohankumar, printed at Lakshmi Press, Sivakasi, for Decora Printers, Thrissoor, Editor : Muralidharan.

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UNITY IN THE DIVERSITY OF MANIFESTOES

Gautam Kumar

The dissolution of the Parliament and the circumstances that forced this step was the final act in a series of manipulations and horse tradings where the head of the State himself was in centre stage. The Cong-I and its allies tried their level best to postpone the election. It is not that the parliamentary parties willingly opted not to remain in power. They were forced to go to the people by the complicated political reality that existed in the country. As a parting gesture, they passed bills almost unanimously for increase in their salaries, pensions and other facilities.

Can the different political parties contending jointly or independently for power will be able to resolve the political crisis India is facing now? The question is very crucial since the bourgeois parliamentary system in India is cracking up. The principal slogan put forward by all parties is 'stability and unity'. According to the Congress-I stability could be there only if it is voted into power. The stability promised is not political stability, but in terms of numerical strength which it had in the past several years. It is Cong-I tactic to create uncertainty and insecurity among its rank and file as well as in the country in order to remain in power. The numerous destabilisations of State governments and the record number of ministerial reshuffles it has done in the past are concrete examples of this. The stability provided was the result of tactical programmes pertaining to the dynamics of different factions, ruling classes and capitulation of the central leadership.

BJP has repeatedly stressed its stand for a powerful centre and with its slogan 'Ram-Roti and Insaaf' it clearly spells out the kind of future India it stands for — fascist Brahminic suppression. While Cong-I and BJP demands a strong centre the National Front's idea of Unity and integrity of the country is some what different. VP Singh has put out that secularism, Unity and Social justice are the main issues in the election. To BJP the integrity and unity of India can be preserved by establishing Hindu Rashtra. But the moderate liberal integrationist approach of the National Front allowing a certain degree of decentralisation aims at assimilating regional 'interests and accommodating regional parties into its fold. The cover up fell through as the struggle to liberate Kashmir and Assam began to bite the comprador bureaucratic class. The fall of VP Singh itself was the indication of limitations of liberal integrationism.

Unlike the other elections, secularism is now on the agenda. In the context of the uprising of hindu fundamentalism and revivalism which threatens the existence of minorities the attitudes of bourgeois parties are important. Except the BJP all others claim to be continuing the secularist tradition of the Indian state. But in the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi controversy all these parties joined together in not allowing the Muslims to worship in the Babri Masjid. To VP Singh and the Left and the Congress (I) the entire problem is only of law. According to them the court will decide the matter. Hindu appeasing attitudes and positions adopted by the bourgeois parties, at a time when the survival of a minority community is in danger, is to exploit the high tide of Hindu revivalism. Instead of defending and fighting for minority rights Janata Dal which is sour over the fall of secularist values is actually taking

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